The Chronicle and Index

OF THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

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The Rev. J. C. Street acknowledges, with thanks, the receipt of the following subscriptions in aid of the gratuitous publication of the *Chronicle and Index*:—

James Adrain, Magheramourne, £0 2 6
Mrs. F. Osler, Birmingham ... 0 5 0

Further subscriptions are needed, and will be gladly acknowledged.

Any one desirous of having for distribution tracts bearing on the various phases of Unitarianism, may have them on applying to Rev. J. C. Street, 16, Queen's Arcade, Belfast.

A new Society has sprung into existence in Belfast. It is called the "Progressive Society." Its aim is to consider and discuss religious and social topics in a free and reverent spirit. Every one is to have a chance to be heard. Its meetings are held in the "Forester's Hall," on Sunday afternoons. The Rev. J. C. Street was invited to deliver the opening address. He consented, and chose for his subject "The Transient and Permanent Elements in Religion." He had a courteous hearing. Discussion was invited, but no one responded. A hearty expression of thanks to the lecturer concluded the proceedings of the first meeting. On the following Sundays, papers were read by Mr. Gilliland, on "The Bibles of the World;" and by Mr. Shone, on "New Testament Inspiration;" discussion followed these papers. The friends of the Society are hopeful that it will accomplish a good work in the community.

In some of our churches in the North of Ireland, Sunday Evening Services have now been resumed, and they will doubtless be maintained throughout the winter season. As at these Services many strangers are sure to be present, the opportunity should be used to distribute our literature as widely as possible. The written page travels farther than the preacher's voice.

The Rev. J. C. Street has, with the month of October, begun his Sunday Evening Lectures, and they have been well attended. He has treated on the following subjects during the month:—

1. Civilization and Christianity.
2. Is Christianity a Failure?
3. Are the People Falling or Rising?
4. The Lesson of a Book—John Ward, the Preacher.

The circular in our columns this month addressed to parents, will be carefully considered by ministers as well. They will, in the way that seems best to them, help the parents in their important duty of giving a religious education to the young. Some will pursue one plan, and some another; but all will aim after the same result. Mr. Street has commenced a systematic series of special addresses on religious topics, in the Sunday-school at Rosemary Street. He speaks to the assembled teachers and scholars every Sunday morning for about a quarter of an hour; and tries by giving a definite direction to these connected addresses to impart a knowledge and love of religious life and thought, which will prove serviceable to all who regularly attend. Other ministers are doubtlessly doing what they can for the religious life of the young.

The session of the Rosemary Street Mutual Improvement Association, whose opening soiree we reported in our last issue, has vigourously commenced its work. On Oct. 8th, the Rev. W. Holmshaw lectured on "The Religion of Shakespeare" to a large and interested audience. On the 15th, an elaborate paper, full of important matter and suggestions on "Socialism and Land," was read by Mr. Thomas Wilson. It was followed by a most animated and thoughtful discussion, in which many members took part. On the 22nd, Mr. James Cowie read a closely reasoned scientific paper on "The Sun," which commanded great attention, and led to a series of searching questions, which were carefully answered. The last meeting of the month on the 29th, was devoted to a consideration of the question, "Have Christian Missions been Successful?" The meetings of the month have been interesting and attractive, and new members have been added to the Association.

We deem it right to give what publicity we can to the two following circulars, the first addressed to the ministry of the Free Church; and the second to the parents of the young people in the Unitarian connection. The importance of these circulars will be appreciated, and the grave matters dealt with in them will deserve and command serious attention.

TO OUR BRETHREN IN THE MINISTRY OF THE FREE CHURCHES.

Dear Friends,—Deeply impressed with the awfulness of the Social Impurity abounding almost unchecked in our midst, we feel that the time has come to take counsel together as to the best means of grappling with it. The solemn charge has been committed to us, as ministers of religion, of speaking the prophet's word to those who are engrossed in the cares of life, and of guiding the untrained faculties of the young in the direction of godly purity. Upon the vice of reckless indulgence in gambling or strong drink, we do not hesitate to speak a firm, timely word; but a more insidious evil besets our young people, and for the most part we are silent.

The silence has its origin in a growing feeling of delicacy and a shrinking from the coarse language which was common in times not very remote; but we are obliged sorrowfully to admit that reticence has been carried too far, and that a sin which is not rebuked spreads itself insidiously, and has attained proportions which must excite the gravest concern in the minds of those who care not alone for the moral, but for the physical welfare of the nation. There is a false standard of judgment, which readily condones in the man what is deemed unpardonable in the woman. Evil habits are often contracted through sheer ignorance. Foul conversation is used with a very imperfect sense of its impropriety and danger. And some fall, neither through ignorance nor through indifference to the moral law, but from want of an earnest word to strengthen their better purpose.

We believe that, in some way, we ought to endeavour to combat this great sin, to create a purer judgment in regard to it, and to warn those who are in peril. We ask for your serious consideration of this matter, leaving it to your own judgment to act as opportunity may suggest. The great safeguard in relation to all the appetites is reverence for the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and if holiness can be won as a positive virtue without any prior forfeiture of innocence, the highest result is attained. But in multitudes of cases this cannot be. Plain and direct speech, whether of warning or rebuke, must be sometimes used; and we must be careful that none perishes whom we might possibly have saved by a word in season.

The task is one of difficulty, requiring a wise and delicate thoughtfulness; but the pure in heart, whose love would save the purity of others, will find their own path, and in some way bear a faithful witness against the false sentiments and immoral practice which infest so large a part of English society.

The Social Purity Alliance, at whose suggestion this Address is issued, was the Pioneer Society in proclaiming that the law of purity is equally binding upon men and women. Unlike some other societies, it is thoroughly unsectarian,

being supported by earnest people of both sexes, representing all phases of theological and political thought. The Alliance is purely educational, trusting to quiet personal influence rather than to sensational methods. Helpful literature on this most difficult question will be willingly sent by the Secretary, on application addressed to 33, Vincent Square, Westminster, S.W. We cordially commend the claims of the Alliance to your attention.

(Signed)—Jas. Drummond, LL.D., London; J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A., London; R. L. Carpenter, B.A., Bridport; J. Edwin Odgers, M.A., Altrincham; Henry W. Crosskey, LL.D., Birmingham; S. Alfred Steinhal, Manchester; James C. Street, Belfast; R. A. Armstrong, B.A., Liverpool; Ambrose N. Blatchford, B.A., Bristol; Silas Farrington, Manchester; Frank Walters, Newcastle-on-Tyne; A. Lazenby, Glasgow; Christopher J. Street, M.A., Croydon.

TO THE PARENTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE UNITARIAN CONNECTION.

Fellow-worshippers,—Acting on a resolution passed after earnest discussion at a meeting held in Essex Hall, London, on the 25th of May last, we venture, with great respect, to approach you on a subject lying very near to our hearts, and, as we deem, of vital importance to the best life of the rising generation. We refer to the wide neglect of any regular instruction of our children and young people in the principles of our churches and even in the foundations of religious belief; and we earnestly solicit your grave consideration of the views which we feel it laid upon us to express.

Earlier in the present century the education of the children born in the circle of our churches was very generally confided to Unitarian ministers and others whose religious influence was entirely concordant with the faith of the parents of that day; and those children were naturally led by such influence and by the friendships formed at school with young people belonging to the same circles, to maintain through life the religious connections of their earlier years. Similar schools conducted by Unitarians, and some of them of great excellence, still exist, and are doing admirable service; but the development of the Grammar Schools throughout the country, the liberalisation of some of the great Public Schools for boys, and the establishment of High Schools for girls have led to a very large withdrawal of our children from these private seminaries, and a consequent loss to them of those influences which were of so much value to a former generation. It would not be proper for us to offer an opinion as to the advantage or otherwise of this great change in the education of our young people; but we trust that you will not deem us impertinent in calling your attention to, and laying great stress on, the general effect of this movement from a religious point of view.

That effect is in many cases the subjection of scholars, whose parents are connected with our churches, to a course of instruction in the dogmatic theology which these reject; or if they are withdrawn from this, the expulsion of any regular religious culture whatever, together with the banishment of all direct instruction in the principles of our own churches, from the education of those who will in a few years succeed to our place as citizens and parents. It is not only that many of the secular teachers under whom our children are placed during the momentous period of youth, however excellent and able, are not in sympathy with the liberal religious ideas to which we ourselves are attached; but the demands made on the time and energies of our young people by the school curriculum leave little leisure for any religious training at all.

To us these facts appear fraught with the gravest danger to the best and highest life of the rising generation in our borders. Deeply attached as we are to our free churches, cognisant of the noble integrity and steadfast consecration by which our fathers built them up, impressed with the unspeakable value of a faith which has nothing to fear from science, from criticism, or from the utmost freedom of inquiry, proud of a churchmanship which, rejecting the authority of creeds imposed from without, asks only absolute sincerity of thought and speech, we are moved by a profound desire that our children may learn to comprehend

the significance, to rejoice in the privilege, and to discharge steadfastly the responsibilities of membership in our religious community. But earnest as is our wish that they may be led to stand fast by their calling to this churchmanship, we deem it immeasurably more momentous still that a true religious life should be nurtured in their hearts and that their young minds should be helped by all available means so to think of God and Christ and spiritual things, that there may be no more warfare in them between the intellectual understanding and the deep and eternal needs of the spiritual life. Sad indeed will be our dereliction from the solemn trust imposed on us if, either through our carelessness or through our unbalanced eagerness for their secular or academical advancement, our young people shall enter on the responsibilities of adult life, not only uninstructed in the principles for which our churches stand amid the contending sects, but without clear thought concerning their relation to God and the true power of religion and of prayer to help men in difficulty, in temptation, and in sorrow.

We are aware that intellectual teaching alone cannot kindle the spiritual life; but we are persuaded that such teaching, wisely and lovingly given, is no small help towards that life, and that the lack of it causes many to drift away from all religious belief.

We know, too, that many parents, in their anxiety to leave the minds of their children free, deliberately abstain from biasing them towards their own religious views; but we are convinced that such a policy is unfair to the children, depriving them of their natural guidance, and leaving them a prey to the first person, "Orthodox" or "Secularist," who may be sufficiently earnest to make an effort to "convert" them.

Moved by these considerations, and believing that the prosperity of our own churches—important as we deem it—is the smallest and lowest interest which they affect, we would urge upon you, at whatever sacrifice, so to arrange the education of your children that it shall include, as essential, the training of their minds in simple, but systematic religious thought and in the understanding especially of the principles of the churches of which you and we are members. We unhesitatingly believe that no teaching can ever take the place of that of the teachers appointed by God in these matters,—the father and the mother. But we are aware that in very many cases the parents, while they alone can touch the deepest springs of the religious affections, yet distrust their competency to give stated and detailed teaching on the intellectual foundations of religion. Should such be your feeling, we would venture to urge you to avail yourselves of those classes for young people, meeting from time to time, which every earnest-minded minister would so gladly gather round him. We believe that throughout our connection the ministers would feel the keenest joy in holding such meetings at stated periods of the year; and we know that, in many instances, they do hold them with the happiest effect, though their value is frequently impaired by the indifference of parents and the trivial difficulties which they permit to interfere with the attendance of their children. We believe that for little boys and girls, as well as for young people of sixteen years and upwards, these classes may be held with the utmost advantage; and we know that in such classes many ministers find their most delightful work.

Earnestly entreating your reception of this appeal in the fraternal spirit in which it is addressed to you,

We are, most sincerely yours,

L. M. Aspland, London; R. A. Armstrong, Liverpool; James R. Beard, Manchester; W. Copeland Bowie, London; J. Estlin Carpenter, London; Russell Lant Carpenter, Bridport; Charles C. Coe, Bolton; Henry W. Crosskey, Birmingham; R. D. Darbishire, Manchester; John Dendy, jun., Monton; James Drummond, London; Richard Enfield, Bramcote, Notts; Henry R. Greg, Styal; Charles Hargrove, Leeds; James Harwood, Nottingham; Ellen Higginson, Southport; P. M. Higginson, Monton; John Page Hopps, Leicester; Henry Iorson, London; Charles Wm. Jones, Liverpool; Albert Lazenby, Glasgow; Joseph Lupton, Leeds; J. E. Manning, Swansea; David

Martineau, London; James Martineau, London; John S. Mathers, Leeds; Frederick Nettlefold, Streatham; Herbert New, Evesham; W. Blake Odgers, London; Harry Rawson, Eccles; Thomas Sadler, Hampstead; S. Alfred Steinthal, Manchester; James C. Street, Belfast; Nathaniel M. Tayler, London; Stephen S. Tayler, London; Frank Taylor, Bolton; Catherine Turner, Nottingham; I. M. Wade, London; Douglas Walmsley, Bury; Frank Walters, Newcastle; W. Carey Walters, London; Philip H. Wicksteed, London; Joseph Wood, Birmingham.

SONNET.

BY HOWARD FREMONT STRATTON.

Sometimes, I seem to feel that thou art bending
An earnest spirit-gaze upon my face:
The ties which bound us were too strong for rending;
It cannot be that death shall bring the ending
Of all our long-shared sympathies. The place
Which thou hast filled can never vacant stand,
Although at times I reach a fearful hand,
And cry to thee to grant me but this grace:
That thou wilt by some sign break the impending
And dangerous distrust that would erase
This fairest faith I hold, which doth allow
We have far closer, true communion now.
And this great change, called death, is not to sever,
But to unite us, soul to soul, forever.

The most distinctive attribute of Emerson among other religious teachers is his cheer. He is as cheerful as Nature. To induce sober submission to the inevitable, to breed strong fortitude, to assuage sorrow with the gleam of a distant hope—these are not his functions; rather, to vivify the soul with the thrilling sense of infinite triumph. Through him again the voice breaks upon the world, heard now and again through the ages, each time with a larger hope, a nearer promise: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

Deepest, subtlest, hardest to express, is the Soul's sense of Divinity within itself—a power one with the Soul, our highest self, drawing gradually, with intensest energy, the whole of self into harmony with that higher self, and with its source; acting outwardly upon other lives; promising something of future attainment, of which all our phrases of immortality seem but meagre hints. Says Emerson (I quote imperfectly, from memory): "Alone, original, and pure, the Soul opens itself to the Lovely, the Original, the Pure, who on that condition enters it gladly, abides in it, acts through it." Said Jesus, "My Father and I are one!"
—*Century Magazine.*

It is said that there is an old Lord Fauntleroy in England, rich and childless, who has read Mrs. Burnett's story and thoroughly enjoyed it, has even written to thank her for it, and in an interview has asked her to continue the story and show the boy as a man. It is not the first time that this suggestion has been made. Mrs. Burnett's son Vivian was, it is said, the model of the little lord. So, to make the story complete, the old lord should adopt him, and bequeath him his title as well as his estates, particularly as he is said to have no heir. Just who this rich and childless Lord Fauntleroy is the peerages fail to tell us. It may be that some old nobleman of another name, but answering the description in the book, is referred to in this interesting story.

"The study of science implies the surest belief that God's works are worth study, the fullest recognition that the author of those works is worthy our reverence."—*Richard A. Proctor.*

THE MARTYRS OF TO-DAY.

FROM "THE LINK."

In matters theological the advance of knowledge is commonly supposed to be marked by the steady decline of martyrdom, and there is reason for this belief. The gulf between the present time and the ages when the readiest answer to an inconvenient opponent was to burn him is so vast, that it is somewhat

difficult to span it, even in thought. Persecution and intolerance have by no means vanished from the earth, but it is not conceivable that anything can bring back the time when bodily torture was openly the penalty for mere difference of opinion. The world moves slowly, but it does move, and the martyrdom of the Middle Ages is gone, never to return. In matters social we suppose that we see a similar movement and a similar advance. If a casual observer were asked to point out the distinguishing characteristic of this latter half of the nineteenth century as compared with the fourteenth or fifteenth, he would probably say that now we have recognised, if not completely, yet very largely, the worth and dignity of human life—that men are treated as human beings and not as slaves, that the serfdom of the middle ages, which often was a martyrdom in itself, has given place to a higher and a nobler conception of the purpose of humanity, and that especially with regard to women and children civilisation has proved a softening and beneficent influence.

A casual observer would say this, but the social student knows that unhappily this view is in too many instances but a very superficial one. The newer social movement of our time is based and founded on the fact that civilisation has not done a tithe of what it might have done for the working bees of the human hive. Thoughtful men and women perceive, if not the actual outward barbarism of the past, yet much of its selfish spirit in the circumstances of to-day, and the whole social movement, the crusade against some of the results of so-called civilisation, is a movement to liberate the prisoners of poverty from a form of martyrdom which is made more bitter by its being labelled with the name of freedom.

As was natural, this crusade has been undertaken largely on behalf of men, but it is even more necessary on behalf of the women and the children. For ages men have been the principal figures on the world's stage, but behind the scenes, coming more prominently forward as thought advanced, have been the women, and now, no longer behind the scenes, but pressing more and more into the light of day, we see the great army of the mothers and the sisters, the wives and the daughters of the poor, palefaced and hollow-eyed, their careworn features lined with the marks of anxiety and toil, their forms prematurely bent and aged—a weary, hopeless band; and with them the greater army of the little ones, with their pitiful wailing voices, their half-starved frightened faces, and their patient eyes, speechless, but most eloquent. We pity and we work for the men who are the victims of our boasted progress and our vaunted civilisation, but these helpless women and children, these are indeed the martyrs of to-day.

Fifty years ago, Hood wrote of the seamstresses of his day:

> "It's oh! to be a slave
> Along with the barbarous Turk,
> Where woman has never a soul to save,
> If this is Christian work."

And about the same time, Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote of the children:

> "Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
> Ere sorrow comes with years?
> They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
> And *that* cannot stop their tears."

We have advanced since then! Factory laws have been passed, members of Parliament occasionally say a kindly word on behalf of the daughters of the people. Board schools are spreading over the land, and some cultured, well-to-do women are even able to vote for municipal councillors. And still the martyrdom goes on; still in lonely garret, and in sweating den, the "Song of the Shirt" is the mother's anthem of despair, and still do these mothers hear the children weeping and cannot stop their tears. What would Tom Hood think if to-day he could hear the Sweating Commission's evidence, and what would Mrs Browning think if she could know that one in three of the poorer children in our Board Schools leave home in the morning sick and faint with hunger? The martyrdom of woman and child was bad in their day, but from an intimate knowledge of present facts, I assert unhesitatingly that it is as bad now, and in some cases even worse. At the moment that I am writing women with hopeless, breaking hearts are wearing out their lives in Staffordshire and Worcestershire in the chain forges and the nail shops, swinging

heavy hammers twelve hours a day for a sum which would not suffice to buy a West End lady a pair of gloves, and in these same forges are their children, some of them bent and deformed with toil, with all the grace and tenderness of childhood stamped out of their faces and their forms: and here in London the absolute horror of existence for tens of thousands of women and of little ones is too terrible to dwell upon. The utter hopelessness of their lives is in itself a bitterer martyrdom than even the pangs of starvation or the fear of death. What present human outlook have the women and the girls in the Worcestershire nailshops, the Droitwich salt-mines, the Darlaston nut and bolt forges, the London match factories? Where are the joy and the beauty of existence for the wives and daughters of the English agricultural laborers or the Scotch and Irish peasants—for the slum children of Glasgow and of Edinburgh, of Whitechapel and of Spitalfields? Men prate of the social evil, and dainty women shudderingly draw their skirts from the harlots' touch! Is it any wonder that the daughters of the poor, tired of hunger and desperate with hopelessness, should snatch at anything which promises them even a fictitious relief, and so allow themselves to be drawn little by little into the fatal whirlpool of the streets, there to sell their honor and their bodies for bread.

In the name of the "survival of the fittest" creed we are sometimes told that all this martrydom is a necessary outcome of human nature. It is not true, and it never can be true. There is a higher and a nobler law than this, and that is the law of personal human responsibility. It was not my intention to use this article simply for the purpose of harrowing the feelings of my readers. That is useless; but I do want to drive home to the hearts and minds of those who care to think, the great truth that in a very large degree men and women are responsible for the discords of the still sad music of humanity. Till economic and social conditions are permanently altered and transformed, much of what we deplore must inevitably occur, but these conditions never will be altered while the feeling obtains that our social evils are inevitable because they are natural. Many of our cultured men and women are vaguely sympathetic with regard to the state of things which I have described. They feel at times a restless uneasiness when such facts are brought prominently under their notice, and their purses are often freely opened to relieve any individual case of hardship or distress. Much of the money which has been subscribed to the Law and Liberty League has come from this class of persons, but that is not enough—it hardly touches the fringe of the question. I do not now dwell on the economic side of the subject, but on another aspect. Women and children are being slowly crushed out of existence by the relentless grinding of the social mill of our present order, and no men nor women can truly appreciate the meaning of life till they realise the imperative duty and responsibility which lie upon them individually so long as this state of things continues. Some women rise up early, and late take rest, and eat the bread of weariness—for such lives as these the cultured women whose existence is grace and sunshine and nothing more are responsible. Harlots walk our streets and in the eyes of the virtuous disgrace the name of womanhood—their disgrace lies at the door of those whose way is among the roses of the earth, and who do nothing but fling the thorns of scorn at their fallen sisters. Little children are daily made the slaves of a civilisation which in this respect is far worse than any barbarism—their degradation is due to those whose whole care and attention are centred on the pretty clothes and dainty food and pleasant lives of their own little ones. Let a true woman but once realise the pathos of hopelessness which prompted the last words of that girl who lately died in a London slum—that she was glad to die, because then there would be more bread for those who were left—let her think of her own carefully tended darling in a condition such as that, and this sense of personal human responsibility will become so imperative, so overmastering, that she will never rest till she has thrown in her lot with the ever-increasing army of the workers for humanity.

And this work has its fruition in the personal development of the nobler faculties of those who perform it faithfully and well. The sympathetic side of responsibility is peculiarly the woman's side, and it is to my women

readers that I especially appeal. In "Miles Standish" Longfellow makes Priscilla say to John Alden,

It is the fate of a woman
Long to be patient and silent, to wait like a ghost that is speechless,
Till some questioning voice dissolves the spell of its silence.

No true woman need be speechless and silent now. On every side the questioning voices of this transition age gather thick and fast around us—the tears of the women and the wailing of the children who are fast bound in the fetters of the old social order are pitifully eloquent in their pathetic sorrow and their pain. Those whose ears are attuned aright, and whose hearts can be touched to finer issues, know that while the pathos of human life will probably ever remain, its pain should be but an accident, a martyrdom which should be unnatural and therefore but transient. The martyrs of to-day are everywhere around us. For them we are each and all responsible. To recognise our responsibility is the first step towards performing our duty, and that duty is the service of our kind. There is one thing greater and nobler than the Service of Men, and that is the Service of the Women and the Children.

HERBERT BURROWS.

Rosemary Street Mutual Improvement Association.

SEVENTEENTH SESSION, 1888-89.

The Committee have the pleasure of announcing the following

PROGRAMME UNTIL CHRISTMAS 1888.

1888.

Nov. 5	"Is Atheism Logical?"	Mr. J. Murphy.
„ 12	"Wordsworth,"	Mr. W. J. Sloane.
„ 19	"Money," ..	Mr. W. G. Mulligan, B.A., LL.B.
„ 26	"Thomas Paine,"	Mr. J. M'C. Martin.
Dec. 3	Lecture, ...	Rev. J. Bruce Wallace, M.A.
„ 10	Music and Readings, ...	Members and Friends.
„ 17	Original Short Papers, ...	Members and Friends.

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